

GEO TECH GRADUATION PARADE 2009

by MWO B.V. Smith



The Graduating class QL5A 0701.

On 14 May 2009, a parade was held to honour the graduation of 32 new Geomatics Technicians who recently completed the inaugural QL5A course. This was the first course to graduate from the new program which was conducted at Algonquin College, Woodroffe campus. These School of Military Mapping (SMM) graduates were the first class of Geo Techs to be awarded with a college diploma.

In August 2007, 32 eager Geo Tech candidates arrived at the SMM Algonquin Campus in the hopes of becoming the newest group of qualified Mappers. The only thing standing in their way was a 21-month, academically intensive college course coupled with two Validation exercises and a long Military Mapping training component. These 32 students were about to embark on the inaugural course conducted under the partnership between Algonquin College and the SMM.



Commandant of Mapping & Charting Establishment, LCol Steve Gregoty, inspects the Graduating Class

Unlike previous QL5 courses, this one would challenge the students in ways never before seen in the Geomatics Technician trade. The students took fully-accredited college courses which were delivered by college professors along with Sgt's from the SMM acting as Teachers Assistants (TA's). These TA's were utilized to give the military spin on the courses the students were taking and to add MCE/SMM specific training. The names of the majority of the courses were similar to previous QL5 courses run at the SMM ie photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems but the content was much more academically challenging than it was for previous classes. These students had to learn the Geomatics trade from both the civilian and the Military sides. There was a steep learning curve for both the students and the staff alike however after all 4 semesters were complete, including Validations and Military components, there were 32 smiling faces ready to join the ranks of Mapping and Charting Establishment.

After checking and rechecking and re-re checking the marks of all the college courses coupled with the Military portions, the final averages were in. The academic difference between first and third was less than 2 percent. This is a remarkable achievement considering the marks are averaged over a 21 month long program and included 22 specific courses. In the end Cpl Todd Blanchette came out on top and was awarded the Top student honours.



Cpl Todd Blanchette receives the Sergeant Majors Award for Top Student.



Cpl Todd Blanchette receives a CME History book for being selected as Top Candidate. The award was presented by CWO Clot, the CME Branch CWO.

Course complete, all that was left was the graduation parade and the “graduates” first mess dinner as GeoTechs. The parade was short and sweet and the Mess Dinner was a night to remember.

In conclusion, the QL5 course 0701 spent numerous classroom and out of class hours in order to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming qualified Geomatics Technicians. From here, many of them will be immediately sent on predeployment training (Cpl Ian Tweedie left for training the Monday after Graduation) equipped with the skills and the education provided by Algonquin College and the SMM.

CHIMO!!